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# Probe of U.S. Arms Sales to Iran Blocked

## CIA CHIEF DROPPING OBJECTION TO SALE OF AWACS TO SHAH

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The Carter administration, once in disarray over the controversial sale of an airborne radar system to Iran, is planning steps to publicly demonstrate that its intelligence chief isn't opposed to the deal.

A key to acceptance of the deal on Capitol Hill is the position taken by Adm. Stansfield Turner, director of central intelligence. It was Turner's fears that the Soviet Union might steal the system's technological secrets that have provided the most useful ammunition to congressional opponents of the sale.

Government officials in a position to know say Turner is now expected to indicate that he is less troubled about the risks of Soviet spying should the air defense system be sold to Iran.

Turner, these sources continue, is expected to go along with an assessment of the sale set down by Defense Secretary Harold Brown in a memorandum written earlier this week to President Carter.

Brown says there is some risk to any such arms transfer, but he argues in the memorandum that the Iran sale is being proposed with "clearly adequate safeguards for our military interests."

**THE MEMORANDUM**, a copy of which was obtained by The Washington Star, was purposely unclassified so that it could be released in support of the sale, say sources. Its contents were to be released when Carter forwards a new proposal on the sale to Congress.

While Turner has steadfastly maintained he took no position on the merits of the sale, his reservations about it have constituted a major obstacle to congressional approval according to opponents and proponents alike.

One government source said Brown's memorandum "was designed to give him (Turner) an excuse to get on board" with the administration.

Another official rejected this characterization, saying Brown's memorandum is an earnest attempt to deal with real concerns, both in Congress and within the CIA.

The very sophisticated radar and computer system involved is called AWACS for airborne warning and control system. The administration, in an exception to Carter's policy to reduce arms sales, wants to make a \$1.2 billion sale of seven of the AWACS planes to Iran.

**CONGRESS MAY** veto such large sales if it acts within 30 days of the time the administration proposes them.

Carter last month withdrew the official congressional notification of the AWACS sale as the possibility of a congressional veto grew. The administration intends to resubmit the proposal Sept. 7.

At the time of withdrawal, Sen. Hubert Humphrey, D-Minn., chairman of the Senate foreign assistance subcommittee, asked for and received from Carter six assurances about training, security and use of the AWACS system if it is sold to Iran. To an extent these overlapped the security worries that were the chief concerns of Turner.

Earlier this month Brown sent Air Force Lt. Gen. Howard Fish, head of the Pentagon's arms sales agency, to Iran to discuss these topics and other concerns.

Fish met with Gen. Hassan Toufanian, Iranian Air Force chief and second only to the shah in the country's military establishment. Their talks formed the basis for Brown's memorandum to the President, which was dated Aug. 29.

**AT THE CIA**, a spokesman said only that Turner would "assess the risks again and let the policy-makers make the decision."

In the memorandum, Brown said, "I believe the results of these consultations with the GOI (government of Iran) should lay to rest the concerns that have been expressed about the ... matters raised in Sen. Humphrey's letter."

The secretary said Iran had "agreed to all of the conditions and assurances. Furthermore, the actual delivery of the aircraft is contingent on all security requirements having been met."

Brown also made a pointed reference to Turner. "I have furnished a copy of the memorandum to the director of central intelligence; it provides new information on his previous questions about the sale of AWACS to Iran," the secretary wrote.

"It is my personal view that there is always some risk in the transfer of any armaments even to our closest allies," Brown went on. "Our experience with Iran has been excellent. However, as a result of the arrangements now made to respond to the expressed concerns of the Congress and of the DCI (Turner), the AWACS sale to Iran has, in my judgment, now been further structured to provide additional and clearly adequate safeguards for our military interests."

Mounting arms sales to Iran have been a controversy for some time. The administration added political troubles to its list of problems in July when it first refused the pleas of Senate leaders to hold off on the sale and then did just that in the face of a setback in the House.